

translation

Sueddeutsche Zeitung (Munich daily - SPD)
-- of February 22, 1971

PRE-OLYMPIC BATTLE ABOUT RADIO FREE EUROPE AND RADIO LIBERTY

THE EASTERN BLOC CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE STATIONS IN MUNICH - LEARNED FROM EXPERIENCE, VALIDATED BY SUCCESS

by Peter Pragal

Introduction: In order to deliver the official invitation to the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich a delegation with the president of the National Olympic Committee, Willi Daume, NOC Secretary General Herbert Kunze and Lord Mayor Hans-Jochen Vogel flew to Moscow over the weekend. The German representatives will probably also be presented in Moscow with the question of what they think of the activity of the American stations Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty in Munich. Before their departure, Daume said on this topic that he was aiming for a "cease-fire" as this idea belonged to the "fundamental principles of the Olympic Games."

The Budapest CP organ Nepszabadsag spoke of an "inheritance from the cold war", the Moscow Pravda used the picture of a "brake on the path to further relaxation of tensions", the Prague Rude Pravo referred to a "threat to the Olympic Games", and the Warsaw paper Zycie Warszawy diagnosed an "outrageous contradiction" to the expressed goals of Bonn's Ostpolitik. East German papers didn't even mince words so much. They were outraged about "inciting stations", "airwave pirates", and "factories of lies."

The coordinated action of the Eastern mass media which has reached a new peak in recent weeks is directed at the two U.S. stations stationed in Munich, Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty, which have taken on the task of breaking through the news monopoly of the totalitarian Eastern Bloc states and of opening to the population in the area of Soviet rule "a window on the West". That the two "thorns in the side of the normalized information system" (Neue Zurcher Zeitung) achieve these goals daily seems to the attacked radio stations to be proved last but not least by the Communist protest. "If we weren't successful", says Robert B. Redlich, press spokesman for Radio Liberty, "they wouldn't blast us so much."

In fact, there is hardly a Western medium of communication which finds such a great echo among the population of the Eastern Bloc as the two radio stations, financed by influential private Americans and the secret service CIA, against whose total broadcasting capacity of about 4000 kilowatts (RFE: 2250 Kw; Liberty: 1840 Kw) Communist jamming stations do not work effectively. Radio Free Europe, which broadcasts to the five Warsaw Pact states, but not to East Germany or the Soviet Union, has calculated a listeners' statistic according to which 65 percent of the adult population of the CSSR is said to receive RFE programs.

In Poland, Rumania and Hungary, the "Voice of the Free World" is hardly less well known. Even in Bulgaria, 40 percent of the adults allegedly tune their radio sets occasionally or regularly to one of the 29 frequencies on which Free Europe broadcasts. Radio Liberty, which directs itself exclusively to the peoples of the USSR, estimates its influence to be similar. "The effect", the Welt Am Sonntag judged about the two U.S. stations, "can only be compared with the legendary reputation of the BBC during the Second World War."

The success, measurable among other things in the reactions of the Communist governments, in indications from emigrants, and in the listeners' letters directed to cover addresses, is also based on experiences similar to those which the English had with the Germans earlier. "Credibility", stresses Ernest Langendorf, an American Muenchner by choice for 25 years, press spokesman of RFE and Editor-In-Chief of the Osteuropaeische Rundschau, "is our guiding principle". Not polemics, but rather objective information (he says) has priority. And an employee of Radio Liberty, which eases into the living rooms of the red citizens around the clock in Russian and 17 other languages of the Soviet peoples, sees the connection between credibility and efficacy as follows: the best propaganda is no propaganda".

This realization, however, has not always prevailed. When Radio Free Europe, based on the occupation statutes, was established in 1950 on the English Garden in Munich, it acted as a part of that American organization which, under the name of "Crusade For Freedom", had set for itself the goal "of calling a halt to the expansion of world communism." At that time, at the high point of the "Cold War", they didn't treat the opponent exactly softly in the Munich studios. "The language", Langendorf notes, "was harder then."

Criticism, not only from the East, which they have always been used to, could therefore hardly not come. When the anti-communist broadcasters from the English Garden had to defend themselves during the peoples uprising in 1956 in Hungary against accusations that they had awakened the impression among their listeners that military help could be expected from the West, which (it was said) extended the useless resistance, the federal government, which had just become sovereign, sent for the tapes in question and started an investigation. Angrily, the then official FDP paper Freies Wort demanded: "Such institutions... should be put out of operation on German territory".

In spite of their militant past, the two radio organizations, which by no means broadcast only political, but also entertainment and sports programs, have succeeded, with their various transmitting stations in Holzkirchen, Mannheim and Portugal (RFE) as well as Spain, Formosa and Lampertheim (Liberty) in constantly raising their reputations, and in becoming a "second newspaper in a one-newspaper state"(Redlich). The reason for this esteem, especially within the inner-communist opposition, which cannot speak up publicly, is the precise information about events in the Soviet area of rule which are not told the citizens by the native media. "They often think over there", Langendorf from RFE says, "that we have an agent in every village". In fact, said Langendorf, (RFE) doesn't even have a single secret correspondent.

The radio journalists, who work under American direction, do not get their knowledge about current events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in any sort of conspiratorial manner. Instead, experts among the Ca. 1200 RFE employees, who -- aside from technical and supervisory personnel -- are almost completely Eastern European emigrants, regularly analyze 800 to 900 newspapers, journals and other periodicals, and read Western correspondents' reports thoroughly. As a further source, there is direct communication with listeners, who keep succeeding in sending letters through the Iron Curtain. Radio Liberty which, including its Western external offices, employs about 1000 people, works in a similar manner. The results of this research are not secret. "Any one who can indicate a half-way believable interest", RFE says, "can inform himself from our documentary center."

The practice of systematically monitoring radio stations from the Eastern Bloc states has proved especially profitable. --With an antenna installation located at Schleissheim, the RFE monitoring service records broadcasts from about 35 stations daily. Their colleagues at Radio Liberty, who are located in a new building in the Arabella complex in Bogenhausen, regularly listen to the words of about 60 Soviet stations.

How revealing the monitored programs often are was shown, for example, at the outbreak of the recent unrest in Poland. Appeals and instructions of local Party functionaries, which were directed at the population over weak local stations in Danzig and Stettin, were taped at Radio Free Europe and broadcast back to all of Poland. The result was that the Polish citizens outside of the closed-off Baltic Sea cities learned about the strikes as well, and the Warsaw Party leadership, which first wanted to say nothing about the events, had to give up its tactics. It is understandable that the two Munich stations "have strongly irritated" the leading Communist organs "for years -- as the Neue Zuercher Zeitung put it.

The upcoming Olympic games and the Bonn foreign policy directed at a relaxation of East-West tensions, have been taken up by the Communist states, which for their part shamelessly carry on a propagandistic war of the airwaves against the West, in order perhaps after all to force, with massive political pressure, the "emigrants' stations" to silence. Moscow and its satellites figure their chances are even greater as more and more people in the Federal Republic as well are asking how it can be compatible with German sovereignty that foreign radio organizations operate on German territory. Thus, the German Journalists Union, for example, protested in Munich against the "propaganda hostile to understanding" of the two organizations, and the Hamburg magazine Stern suggested to the two "U.S. inciting stations": "Ami Go Home."

But a move out of Munich will not be forthcoming in the near future, although leading Social Democrats regard the foreign airwave bridges to the East with mixed feelings, and one or another would certainly be prepared, if he only could, to cut off the electricity of the two stations. From a purely legal standpoint, this wouldn't even be difficult, as the activity of these radio stations is based on private legal contracts for broadcasting licenses with the German Federal Post, which are renewed annually.

But political reality hardly permits a cancellation. A serious attempt by the Federal Government to silence RFE and Radio Liberty, for whom U.S. President Nixon has expressed his "unlimited admiration", would certainly be considered an affront in Washington. "In both organizations", Minister of the Chancellory (EHMKE) noted to his superior, "there are influential people". Indeed: while RFE counts the former military Governor Lucius D. Clay as the Chairman of the Board, Radio Liberty calls the former U.S. President Harry S. Truman, Honorary Chairman of the Board of Directors.

The certainty that both stations will be working beyond 1972 on closing the information gaps of the Communist subjects has led the authorities of the Olympic Games, in unofficial talks, to urge the representatives of both organizations to a "ceasefire". What the Olympic organizers mean by that has been interpreted in various ways up until now. It appears, however, that the partners in the talks have agreed, one - not to try to influence the programming, and the other - "not to try to bother or annoy anyone who visits here."

With the latter promise, they obviously want to contribute to diffusing the fears of the Communist governments that their sportsmen or tourists could be approached annoyingly by employees of the two stations. The concern is not quite unfounded, since a survey institute has interviewed in the last four years, on contract from RFE, more than 20,000 visitors and refugees from Eastern Europe. Radio Liberty too asks emigrants about their experiences in their homelands. In Munich, however, such things are to be avoided in the interest of the Olympic peace. Liberty spokesman Redlich offered this assurance about future visitors from the Eastern Bloc; "We will not contact them".

Die Welt (Hamburg daily - Springer-Conservative)
of February 22, 1971

MOSCOW WANTS TO PREVAIL WITH ITS "OLYMPIC SPIRIT"

by Walter Guenzel

Munich Lord Mayor Vogel and the President of the National Olympic Committee, Daume, have delivered to the Soviets an invitation to Munich for the 1972 Olympic Games. At the moment it seems assured that the Soviet sportsmen will take part in the 1972 Olympics. But Moscow is still imposing conditions: the American stations in Munich should end their activity.

The radio station "Peace and Freedom" refers to itself as "a voice of the Soviet public". It would prove itself to be more trustworthy if its managers would admit that it should be called the voice of the agitation and propaganda department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Section for Foreign Affairs. The German-language service of this station is broadcast from the same territory upon which over twenty Soviet divisions have seen to it for many years that the voice of the German public in Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, Sachsen, Thueringen and Sachsen-Anhalt cannot be heard.

Peace and Freedom transmits all the more intensively the opinions of the central Moscow party paper Pravda, the army newspaper Red Star, and other organs of the Soviet establishment, in the German language -- a comparison of texts proves it. For several months the editors of Peace and Freedom have been assigned to criticize the activity of American stations in the Federal Republic and to demand from Bonn that it should silence these radio stations. Whether it is a matter of the Voice of America, (or) recently Rias in Berlin or the station Radio Free Europe and Liberty (the last mentioned station works exclusively for listeners in the Soviet Union) -- they don't, according to Peace and Freedom which sets the tone, belong in the Federal Republic.

In one of its latest broadcasts on this topic, Peace and Freedom called, in barely camouflaged form, for acts of terror against the two American stations stationed in Munich. That is, Peace and Freedom said that it was "not to be discounted" that (with regard to the 1972 Olympics in Munich) the "progressive public ... especially the youth of the Bavarian capital ... will take steps" against the American stations, and Peace and Freedom at the same time names the locations of the radio stations in question in Munich. The Bavarian state government probably understood the nature of this impertinent "invitation to the dance", and has taken appropriate measures.

For some time, the Communist attacks against Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty have been tied to threats against the planners of the Olympic Games in Munich. Peace and Freedom says on this topic: "The inciting activity of the American propagandists in Munich is absolutely incompatible with the spirit of the Olympics; it can endanger the holding of the Olympics."

Aside from the fact that the political headquarters in Eastern Europe, addicted as they are to medals, will think it over pretty carefully before prohibiting their athletes from participating in the Munich games, it can be said that Moscow does not stipulate what the "spirit" of the Olympic Games is. If there is such a spirit, then it certainly isn't bottled in the Soviet Union. If the Communists want to refunction the "Olympic spirit", then their arguments will be heard and considered: there is not reason simply to comply with them.

What is the purpose of the threats of boycott, and whom do they wish to impress with them? Who gives the Communist agitprop departments the right to exert pressure on the Federal Government and to demand that it prohibit the activity of the unpopular stations so as to "save the 20th Games"? Those calling for this action must have an absurd and insulting idea of the nature of a democratic and legitimate Western government. Do Peace and Freedom's backers think the Federal Government can be blackmailed? It certainly cannot be. And if it (the German government) says an appropriate word on this dubious affair, and especially if it protests against the above-quoted call to the youth to "take steps" against stations in Munich, then it will have the citizens of this state on its side. The latter have not forgotten what has been preached to them since the collapse in 1945: The East and the West were at the time completely agreed that the Germans under Hitler had been doused with propaganda but cut off from complete information. In unison, this state of affairs was exclaimed to be unbearable and incompatible with democratic principles. Then, the same thing befell the East Europeans which the Germans had had to experience under Hitler: Headquarters doles out the flow of information and censors color it to fit the "general line" which applies at the moment. Is it, one must ask, that the East has suffered complete failure in its attempt to solve the problems of its information policy? Wladyslaw Bienkowski, an unsuspicious Communist witness, former Polish Minister of Culture and friend of Gomulka, writes on this topic:

"It can be said with confidence that the headquarters of hostile foreign propaganda only exploit our mistakes and our lack of ability to understand the problem of information.

Western propaganda has an unbelievably easy task -- it informs (our people) simply about what we do not inform them about ... "

This is what it's all about. Thus, the Bonn government itself seems to be faced with the question as to whether it wants to be partially responsible (for the fact) that millions of Eastern Europeans are to be cut off from information about the Western world and abandoned by the democrats. This problem cannot be solved opportunistically. It must be approached, with respect for the democratic rules of the game, in a more principled manner than is usual with contemporary questions.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Mawry

DATE: 2 March 1971

FROM :

SUBJECT: German media treatment of RFE and RL.

Mr. Meyer thought you might want to give copies of these articles to Congressman Reid. I have given you a few extra copies in case there are others you think would be interested.

JGO - You may want to drop one copy by Reid's office - 7 have been used for the others.